

have information and resources they need to compete at the speed of the Internet.●

#### IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL WOMEN'S BUSINESS WEEK

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of "National Women's Business Week" and of the vital role women business-owners play in our economy.

I would also like to recognize the appointment of Vivian L. Shimoyama to the National Women's Business Council. Ms. Shimoyama is the Founder and President of Breakthru Unlimited, a California company that designs and manufactures projects with a message: hand-made glass artwork of jewelry, executive gifts, limited editions, and custom awards. A brilliant sample of her work is her "Breaking the Ceiling" line of jewelry that has adorned the lapels of Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole. Currently, she serves as the Chair of the National Association of Women Business Owners—Los Angeles. In 1999, she was honored as the Small Business Administration's "Women Business Advocate of the Year".

Ms. Shimoyama runs one of the 1.2 million women-owned businesses headquartered in California. According to a study by the National Foundation for Women Business Owners (NFWBO), these businesses employ 3.8 million workers and generate \$548 billion in annual sales, a growth of 164 percent in seven years.

Without a doubt, women entrepreneurs have played a crucial part in the growth of our economy. NFWBO reports that between 1987 and 1999, the number of women-owned firms increased by 103 percent nationwide, employment increased by 320 percent, and sales increased by 436 percent. As of 1999, there are 9.1 million women-owned businesses in the U.S., which employ 27.5 million people and generate over \$3.6 trillion in sales. To put the sales of these businesses into context, they are twice the size of the Federal budget, and greater than the Gross National Product of every country in the world but the United States and Japan.

An increasing number of these businesses have focused on emerging industries such as high technology. These businesses demand a greater access to capital and information resources than ever before.

Mr. President, I will do all I can to ensure that the women in my state and all over the country have access to the opportunities and resources they need to start new business ventures. However it is also imperative that we invest in the business development resources that will help women sustain and grow these new businesses. This small investment yields big returns in the form of job creation, revenues, and

overall growth of the nation's economy.●

#### MEDICARE BENEFICIARY ACCESS TO QUALITY NURSING HOME CARE ACT OF 1999

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, on the 13th of October, I was proud to cosponsor S. 1500, the Medicare Beneficiary Access to Quality Nursing Home Care Act of 1999. When Congress worked with the President to craft and pass the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, it included a number of desperately needed cost-saving measures to ensure that Medicare did not go bankrupt. At the time, Medicare was projected to be bankrupt by 2001 with annual costs rising at three times the rate of inflation.

However, the Health Care Financing Administration, which oversees the administration of Medicare, has far exceeded the scope of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, and gone beyond the intent of Congress in scaling back health care provider reimbursements. Driven by a philosophy that the Federal Government knows best how to handle your health care decisions, this administration has uniformly adopted policies that limit Medicare beneficiary choice, obstruct critically needed market-based reforms, and relentlessly pursued a strategy of reducing payments to providers as the prime method to reduce outlays.

Sometimes such a "Washington-knows-best" strategy just doesn't work. The fact of the matter is, health care providers will bear costs that cannot be overlooked or undervalued simply because HCFA wishes to declare it so. This has been especially prevalent in the area of Skilled Nursing Facility care. The recently implemented Prospective Payment System (PPS) fails to account for the full range of services required by most Medicare beneficiaries provided care in these facilities.

Specifically, the PPS implemented by HCFA has a payment schedule called Resource Utilization Groups (RUGs) that are intended to account for the needs of individual beneficiaries. However, these RUGs have failed to account for the full range of needs of these beneficiaries, especially for the medically complex patient. While private market insurance is significantly better at recognizing the needs of the medically complex patient, the failure of this administration to allow for any type of market-based reform to move forward has forced us to rely upon the implementation of the PPS by HCFA, which, as I discussed before, seems to have a predisposition towards underpaying for necessary services.

The result, Mr. President, is that beneficiaries are increasingly denied access to lower-cost Skilled Nursing Facilities and are forced to continue

care in higher-cost hospitals where they also may not be able to get the most appropriate level of rehabilitative care. S. 1500, introduced by Senator HATCH, attempts to address the overreaching of HCFA directly and swiftly. First, it would provide for payment "add-ons" for the provision of additional treatment in the care of the medically complex patient. Second, it restores one percentage point of the reductions to the annual inflation adjuster mandated by BBA-97. Although the inflation adjustment reduction was directly written in the BBA-97 language, it's revision provides Congress the most direct and simplest way to counteract the excesses of HCFA.

Mr. President, I am heartened that HCFA has recognized the flaws in the current PPS system and is undertaking a review of this system. However, that review will not be completed until next year. Our Skilled Nursing Facilities need these restorations now in order to continue to provide our Medicare beneficiaries continued and uninterrupted care. That is why I fully support this legislation, am cosponsoring it, and call on my colleagues to do the same as soon as possible.●

#### THIRD ANNUAL CAUCUS FOR POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

● Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the Third Annual Caucus for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, to be held on October 22, 1999.

Designated by Congress in 1983, the Potomac Heritage Trail is unlike any other trail in the National Trails System. The corridor which follows "Our Nation's River" includes both the boyhood home and Mt. Vernon estate of our first President, George Washington, significant greenways and parks, and nearby centers of commerce which are vital to the economic vitality of Virginia and the capital region.

I congratulate the National Park Service, the Potomac Heritage Partnership, the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission and other advocates of this National Scenic Trail in persevering in their efforts to increase opportunities for enhancing commerce, conservation and cultural initiatives along the Potomac River. I wish them continued success in the years to come.●

#### IN RECOGNITION OF DOUGLAS C. STRAIN

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to recognize the 55th anniversary of Electro Scientific Industries, Incorporated, ESI, and to honor the accomplishments of Mr. Douglas C. Strain, ESI's founder and first president and chairman of ESI's board.

Established in Portland in 1944, ESI was among the first high-technology